

STATINTL

Secret War Keeps Castro Off Balance

CPYRGHT

By AL BURT
Herald Latin America Editor

The secret war against Fidel Castro, the one you rarely see or hear about, continues at a steadily harassing pace and Castro himself is the best evidence of it.

The Cuban government testified to it Saturday by announcing the execution of the eighth Cuban in nine days as a spy.

The secret war, in which men die without ever issuing a war communique, does not rise and fall with waves of propaganda. Its presence surfaced clearly last fall and it continues now — not enough to topple Castro, but enough to keep him off balance.

Castro, though surrounded by Latin America's biggest

military machine, betrays his awareness of the silent forces moving against him. He retaliates with repressive acts which add to his troubles.

* * *

THE BATTLE gives few echoes, and the full extent of its success can only be guessed, but a trail of facts

and Castro responses establish its presence.

These reveal widespread infiltration of Cuba, sabotage and riotous raids from the outside. The effect is to keep pressure on the government.

Keep resistance alive and make the world aware that Cuba is having trouble with Cubans.

If the Central Intelligence

Agency masterminds the secret war, as Castro repeatedly insists, then it must have changed since the bungling of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion.

* * *

MIQUEL CESAR Diaz Infante, whose execution was announced Saturday, was the highest Castro official ever to die before a firing squad. He

was a member of the Cuban Ministry of Interior Commerce.

The Cuban government announcement said he sent economic and military information to the CIA, and purposely tried to disrupt deliveries of food or equipment in order to "create difficult situations and provoke discontent."

The announcement claimed Diaz Infante confessed to sending the information through the channels of a counter-revolutionary organization described as a front for the CIA.

* * *

DIAZ INFANTE'S sub-chiefs, Francisco Linares Serrano and Saturnino Polon Pinero, also were accused and given undisclosed prison sentences.

Four other men, including Felipe Vidal Santiago, a former Castro naval aide,

trying to infiltrate, were executed May 28 in Havana. On June 2, three more were executed in Camaguey. These included Alberto Fernandez, a former wealthy cattle man and officer of Lions Club International.

In a speech May 22, Armed Forces Minister Raul Castro made the most revealing admissions on the secret war.

* * *

"ONE CIA AGENT infiltrated into a state body like the Commerce Ministry does more harm to the revolution than 50 bands of 50 armed counter-revolutionaries in the Oriente hills or 50 ships attacking 50 different targets in the province," Fidel's brother said.

In addition to the Brothers Castro, Industries Minister Ernesto (Che) Guevara has admitted government infiltration by spies.

Fidel Castro acknowledged on May 21 his military units were attempting to liquidate counter-revolutionary groups in four different provinces.

* * *

IN THE PAST six months, there have been two known raids against Cuba from the outside — one which sank a Cuban patrol boat near the Isle of Pines in December (claimed by the exile group Commandos Mambises) and one in May against a sugar mill in Oriente Province

which destroyed sugar warehouses and 70,000 sacks of sugar (retained by exile Manuel Artime's Movement for Revolutionary Recovery).

Castro frequently has complained about the "costly equipment" and "great resources and techniques" used in such raids. After the last one, he also said U.S. surveillance planes overflying Cuba had provided the raiders with information on the target. The U.S. denied any involvement.

Known internal developments since last fall include extensive burning of sugar cane (up to a million dollars damage), a series of explosions at an anti-aircraft missile assembly site in Pinar del Rio Province, the April burning of the Lavip mattress factory in Havana, the explosion and fire set by saboteurs at a Havana plastics factory in May, the May discovery of a money and arms cache intended for counter-revolutionaries in Pinar del Rio Province.

* * *

ALL THESE things make the secret war a fact, and reveal it is having a measure of success.

It has not accelerated to a scale which would overthrow Castro, but it continually goads him, and his violent responses goad the people.

Heat is being created, and one day fire might break out.

CPYRGHT